HORROR

AN ENTERTAINING COMIC

NO. 30

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THE VAULT OF HORROR®

AN ENTERTAINING COMIC

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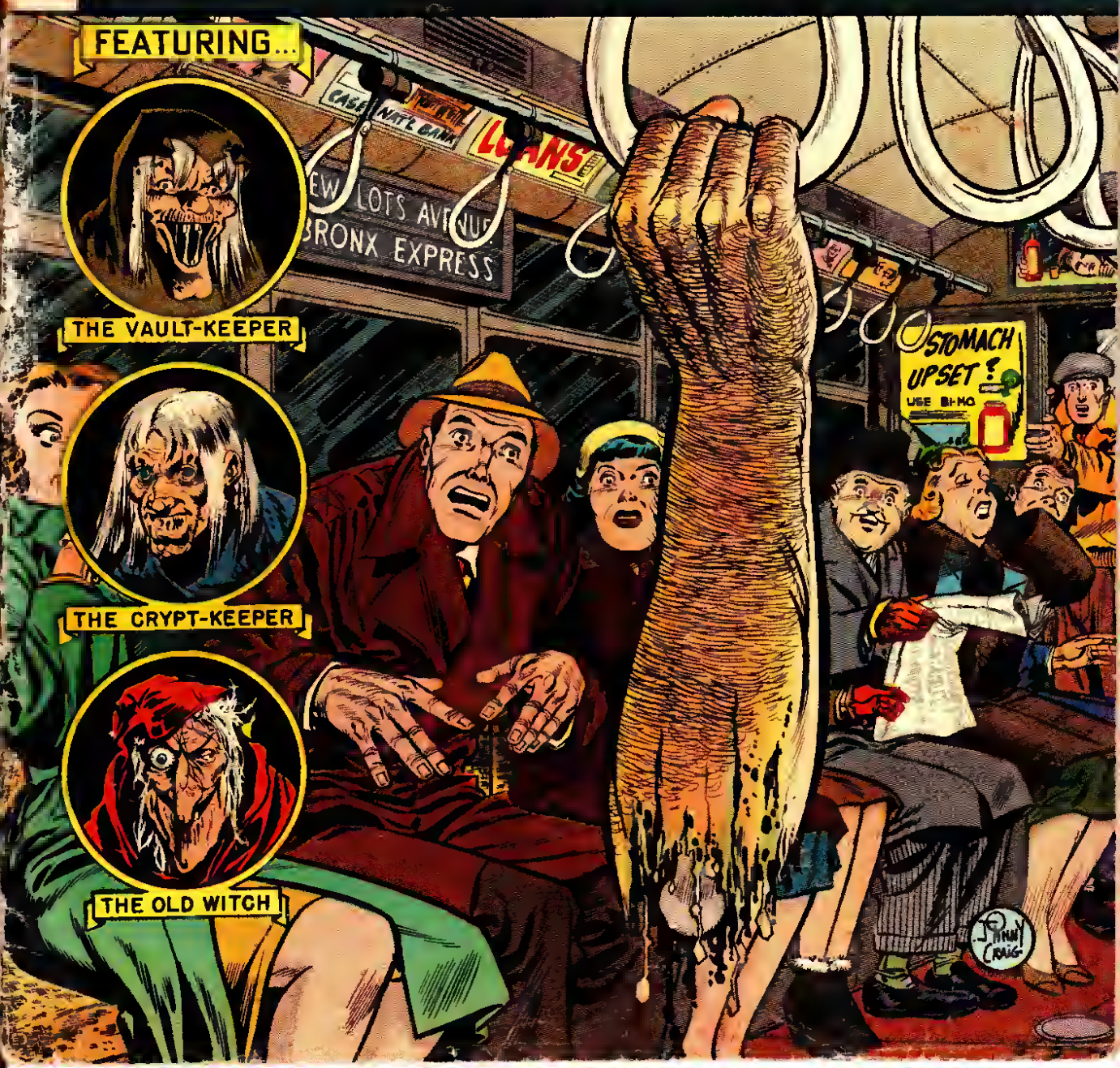

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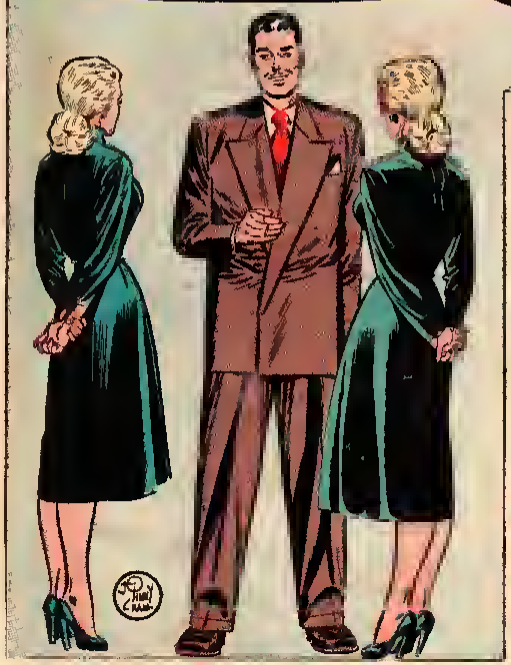
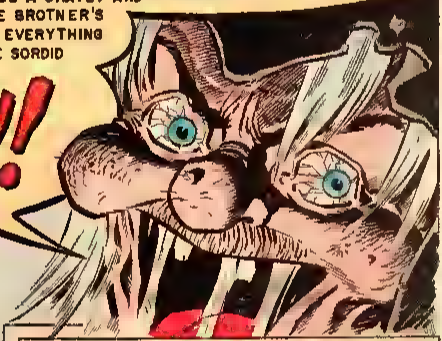
Ontology

THE VAULT OF HORROR!

HEH, HEH! HELLO, AGAIN! THIS IS YOUR FRIENOLY STORYTELLER, THE *VAULT-KEEPER*, INVITING YOU TO JOIN ANOTHER SESSION OF *GRUESOME GRUMBLINGS* THAT EMANATE FROM MY *VILE* ANO *VICIOUS VAULT!* SO PLOP YOURSELF DOWN ON THAT SATIN-COVERED COFFIN ANO GET COMFY! DON'T MIND THE MOLD AND WORM-HOLES! IT'S *SECOND-HAND*, YOU KNOW! YOU, THERE! PUT DOWN TNAT GUN! KILL YOUR MOTHER-IN-LAW LATER! AND YOU, WOMAN... *STOP!* YOUR SLEEPING HUSBAND DIDN'T WANT *THAT* CLOSE A SHAVE! AND *YOU*, YOU FIENO! LET THOSE *MATCHES* ALONE! YOUR LITTLE BROTNER'S *TOES* CAN WAIT! IN OTHER WORDS, OROP (*DEAD*, THAT IS!) EVERYTHING YOU'RE DOING, ANO LISTEN. . LISTEN WHILE I RECOUNT THE SORDID TALE ENTITLEO. . .

SPLIT PERSONALITY!

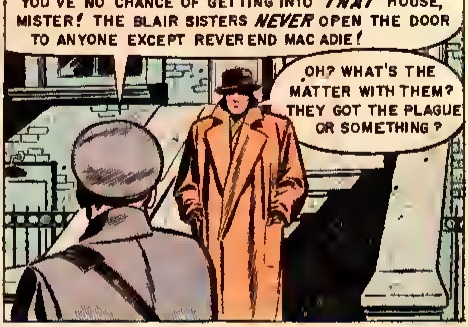


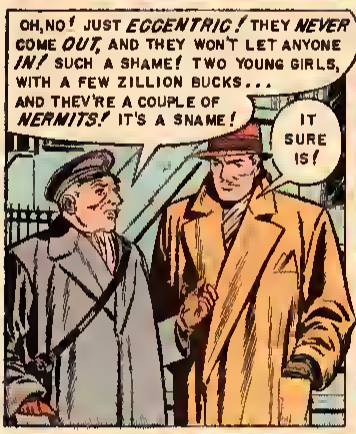


THE CLICKING OF THE TELEPHONE OIAL STUTTERED SIBILANTLY IN THE SPARSELY-FURNISHED ROOM. EO KING GROUNO HIS CIGARETTE IN THE ALREADY OVER-FLOWING ASH-TRAY AND SOFTLY BLEW SMOKE RINGS UNTIL HIS PARTY ANSWERED THEN, GLIB, HONEY-COATEO WORDS DRIPPEO FROM HIS LIPS, EXTOLLING THE VIRTUES OF THE FAKE CHARITY HE SUPPOSEOLY REPRESENTEO. HE LISTENEO A MOMENT, A SMILE CURLING HIS FACE... AND THEN SPOKE AGAIN. MORE WORDS HONEY-COATED.

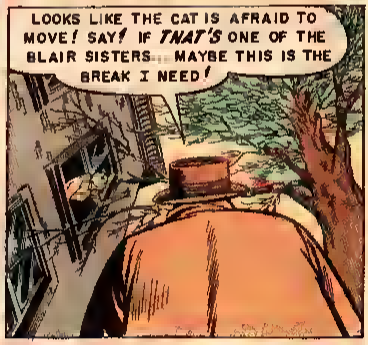
YEP, ED KING WAS A CHARITY RACKETEER.. A CON MAN. OUT TO MILK THE GULLIBLE! BUT HE DIDN'T RELY ON PHONE CALLS ALONE... HE WENT FROM DOOR TO DOOR ALSO, ON THE THEORY THAT A BUCK IN THE POCKET IS WORTH A DOZEN PROMISES OVER THE PHONE...

AN UNANSWERED DOOR WAS A DONATION LOST, TO ED KING'S WAY OF THINKING. DISGRUNTLED, HE TURNED AND STARTED DOWN THE STEPS! THE PASSING POSTMAN STOPPED, GRINNED...

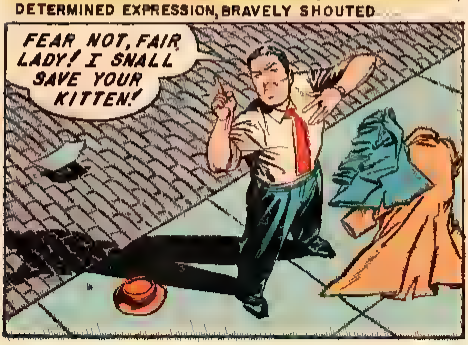




A SHRIEK OF DISMAY! ED LOOKED UP! A YOUNG, PRETTY GIRL LEANED FROM THE TOP FLOOR WINDOW, ANXIOUSLY TRYING TO COAX A TREED CAT TO SAFETY...



WITH A THEATRICAL FLOURISH, ED KING STRIPPED OFF HIS JACKET AND DRAMATICALLY FLUNG IT TO THE GROUND! HE ROLLED UP HIS SHIRTSLEEVES, REVEALING HIS TANNED, MUSCULAR FOREARMS, AND WITH A BOLD, DETERMINED EXPRESSION, BRAVELY SHOUTED...



DAUNTLESSLY, HE BEGAN CLIMBING THE TREE. TREES NEVER USED TO BE SO DIFFICULT TO CLIMB WHEN HE WAS A BOY! SEEMS THEY GREW TALLER NOW. HIS KNEES WERE SKINNED AND HE WAS CERTAIN BLISTERS WERE RAPIDLY GROWING ON HIS HANDS, BUT IF HIS PLAN WORKED, ANYTHING WAS WORTH IT...

FOR TWENTY MINUTES, ED STRUGGLED MIGHTILY WITH THE SNARLING, CLAWING CAT, BUT FINALLY, HIS FACE AND HANDS SCRATCHED AND BLEEDING, HE MAJESTICALLY DELIVERED THE VICIOUS LITTLE BEAST TO ITS GREATLY RELIEVED OWNERS! THE GIRLS DEBATED..

I—I THINK JUST THIS ONCE, AMY, IT WOULD BE PROPER IF WE ALLOWED THIS MAN TO ENTER! AFTER ALL—

WELL...PERHAPS YOU'RE RIGHT, SUSAN! HE *DID* RESCUE OUR CAT... AND HE SEEMS IN NEED OF SOME FIRST-AID, SO.

FOR PETE'S SAKE, A BUY COULD BLEED TO DEATH WHILE THEY DELVED INTO THE INTRICACIES OF THEIR MORAL CODE! BUT THEY RELENTED... AND A SHORT TIME LATER, OLD 'HONEY-TONGUE' WAS HAVING *TEA*...

I TRUST YOUR WOUNDS FEEL BETTER NOW, MR. KING!

OH, INDEED YES, MY DEAR MISS BLAIR! YOUR SOOTHING MEDICATIONS HAVE EASED THE PAIN A GREAT DEAL! AND...IF I MAY SAY SO...THE *TEA* IS *DELICIOUS!*

NATURALLY, ED SLYLY MOVED THE CONVERSATION AROUND UNTIL...

YES, SUSAN AND I HAVE EQUAL SAY OVER OUR WEALTH! HALF AND HALF!

SHARE AND SHARE ALIKE, YOU KNOW! HA! HA! HA!

HE REMAINED FOR SEVERAL HOURS, EXCITING THEM WITH MYTHICAL TALES OF HIS HEROIC DEEDS, AND COMPLIMENTING THEM ABUNDANTLY!

EDWIN, AMY AND I THINK THAT... WELL, IF YOU SHOULD CARE TO RETURN...

YOU HONOR ME, MY DEAR! I ACCEPT!

HE RETURNED MANY TIMES, AND HE SAT THERE, SIPPING TEA, RELATING STORIES, BESTOWING COMPLIMENTS. THE TWIN SISTERS SAT IN OPEN-MOUTHED WONDER AND ADMIRATION!

OH, AMY! HE'S SO *GALLANT!* SO GENTLEMANLY! AND SO... SO *STRONG!* HE'S SUCH A 'MAN OF THE WORLD'! AND SO *RESPECTABLE!*

SUSAN, TO HEAR YOU TALK, ONE WOULD THINK YOU WERE FALLING IN *LOVE* WITH HIM!

WHY, *AMY!* I... I DIDN'T MEAN.. THAT IS, PLEASE DON'T—ER—I—I MEAN. .

OH, STOP GETTING FLUSTERED! IT'S ALL RIGHT! I UNDERSTAND HOW YOU FEEL ABOUT HIM! I FEEL THE SAME WAY! HE... HE *IS* WONDERFUL, ISN'T HE!?

MEANWHILE, IN HIS HOTEL ROOM, THE KIND, GENTLE HONEST, STRONG, BRAVE, NOBLE, RESPECTABLE MAN OF THE WORLD FACED THE SMALL FLOOR NERVOUSLY!

EVENYTHING'S GOING ALONG FINE! I'M SURE I CAN MARRY EITHER ONE OF THEM ALL I HAVE TO DO IS POP THE QUESTION! AND YET, THAT WILL ONLY GIVE ME *HALF* THEIR MONEY! THERE MUST BE *SOME* WAY FOR ME TO GET IT *ALL!*

HAHG IT! TOO BAD THERE ISN'T *TWO* OF ME!

TWO OF ME?!

OF COURSE! *TWINS!*

ON HIS NEXT VISIT, EDWIN EXPLODED THE NEWS OF HIS "TWIN BROTHER".

A TWIN BROTHER? HOW GRAND! BUT WHY HAVEN'T WE MET HIM?

HE'S BEEN AWAY BUT HE'S DUE TO RETURN SOON! IT NEVEN OCCURRED TO ME TO MENTION IT BEFONE!

YOU SEE, MY TWIN BROTHEN AND I OWN SOME VERY IMPORTANT HOLDINGS IN *SOUTH AFRICA!* THE NATURE OF THE WONK DEMANDS THAT *ONE OF US BE THERE AT ALL TIMES!* HE STAYS THERE FOR ONE MONTH, AND I REPLACE HIM UNTIL THE FOLLOWING MONTH, AND SO ONO..

I MUST LEAVE FOR SOUTH AFRICA TOMORROW! IN A FEW DAYS, MY BROTHER WILL RETURN HERE. IF I'M NOT BEING TOO FORWARD, I'D LIKE VERY MUCH FOR HIM TO MEET YOU LOVELY GIRLS!

WHY, WHY, THAT WOULD BE *FINE!*

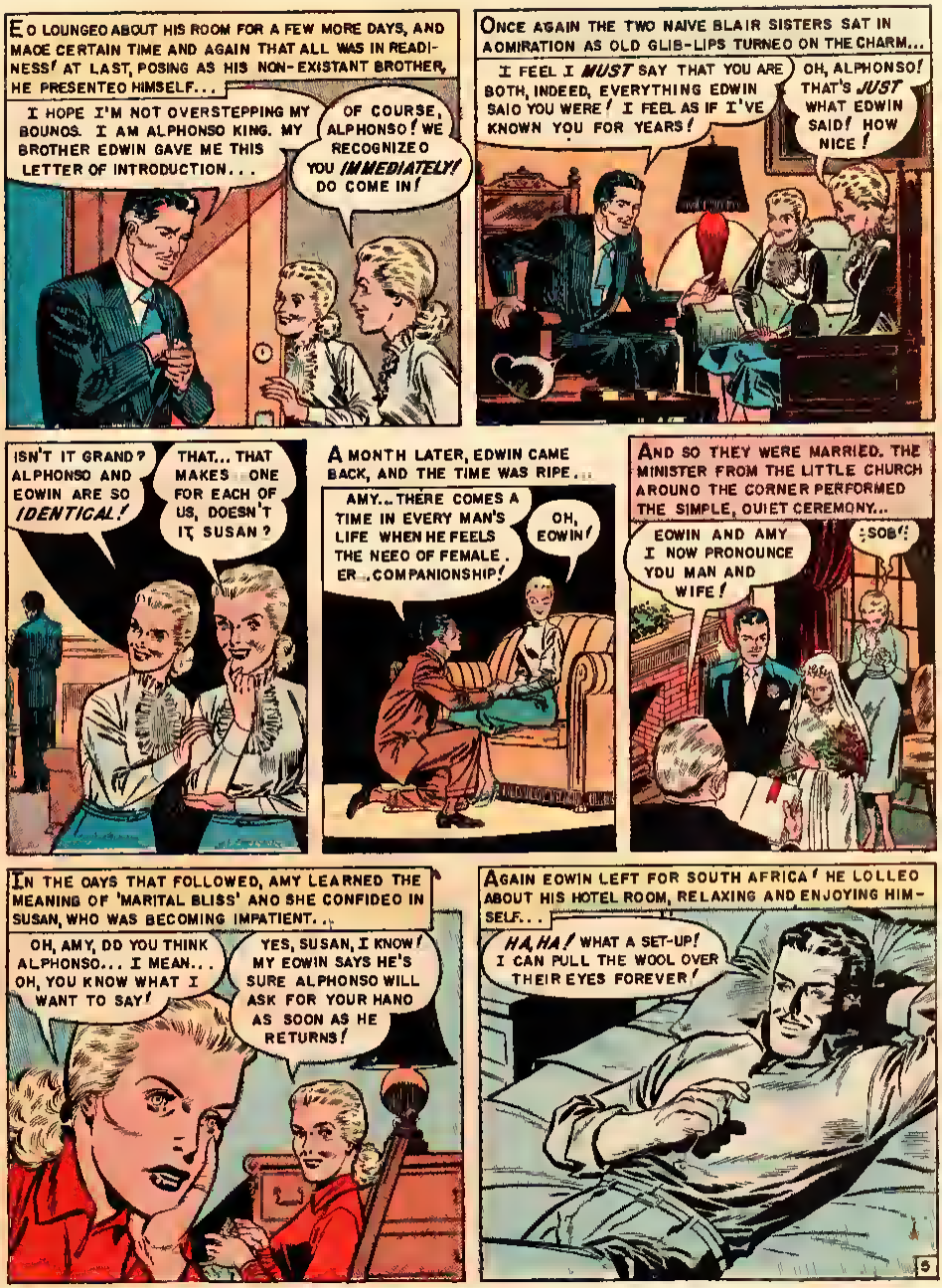
I'VE WRITTEN HIM SO *MUCH* ABOUT YOU TWO! HE FEELS HE KNOWS YOU AS WELL AS I! YOU'LL HAVE NO DIFFICULTY RECOGNIZING HIM, BUT STILL, I'LL GIVE HIM A LETTER OF INTRODUCTION!

WHATEVEN YOU SAY, EDWIN!

YES! WHATEVER YOU SAY!

FON THE NEXT FEW OAYS, EDWIN REMAINED IN HIS HOTEL NOOM. AMY AND SUSAN THOUGHT HE WAS ON HIS WAY TO SOUTH AFRICA, BUT ACTUALLY HE WAS PREPARING FOR HIS "TWIN BROTHER'S" APPEARANCE!

LET'S SEE! NEW LUGGAGE, NEW CLOTHES! BETTER TAKE A SUN-LAMP TREATMENT TO RENEW MY TAN! SUPPOSED TO BE HOT IN SOUTH AFRICA!


EO LOUNGEO ABOUT HIS ROOM FOR A FEW MORE DAYS, AND MAOE CERTAIN TIME AND AGAIN THAT ALL WAS IN READINESS! AT LAST, POSING AS HIS NON-EXISTANT BROTHER, HE PRESENTEO HIMSELF...
I HOPE I'M NOT OVERSTEPPING MY BOUNOS. I AM ALPHONSO KING. MY BROTHER EDWIN GAVE ME THIS LETTER OF INTRODUCTION...
OF COURSE, ALPHONSO! WE RECOGNIZEO YOU IMMEDIATELY! DO COME IN!
ONCE AGAIN THE TWO NAIVE BLAIR SISTERS SAT IN AOMIRATION AS OLD GLIB-LIPS TURNEO ON THE CHARM...
I FEEL I MUST SAY THAT YOU ARE BOTH, INDEED, EVERYTHING EDWIN SAIO YOU WERE! I FEEL AS IF I'VE KNOWN YOU FOR YEARS!
OH, ALPHONSO! THAT'S JUST WHAT EDWIN SAID! HOW NICE!
ISN'T IT GRAND? ALPHONSO AND EOWIN ARE SO IDENTICAL!
THAT... THAT MAKES ONE FOR EACH OF US, DOESN'T IT, SUSAN?
A MONTH LATER, EDWIN CAME BACK, AND THE TIME WAS RIPE...
AMY... THERE COMES A TIME IN EVERY MAN'S LIFE WHEN HE FEELS THE NEEO OF FEMALE. ER... COMPANIONSHIP!
OH, EOWIN!
AND SO THEY WERE MARRIED. THE MINISTER FROM THE LITTLE CHURCH AROUNO THE CORNER PERFORMED THE SIMPLE, QUIET CEREMONY...
EOWIN AND AMY I NOW PRONOUNCE YOU MAN AND WIFE!
:SOB!
IN THE OAYS THAT FOLLOWED, AMY LEARNED THE MEANING OF 'MARITAL BLISS' ANO SHE CONFIDEO IN SUSAN, WHO WAS BECOMING IMPATIENT...
OH, AMY, DO YOU THINK ALPHONSO... I MEAN... OH, YOU KNOW WHAT I WANT TO SAY!
YES, SUSAN, I KNOW! MY EOWIN SAYS HE'S SURE ALPHONSO WILL ASK FOR YOUR HANO AS SOON AS HE RETURNS!
AGAIN EOWIN LEFT FOR SOUTH AFRICA! HE LOLLEO ABOUT HIS HOTEL ROOM, RELAXING AND ENJOYING HIMSELF...
HA, HA! WHAT A SET-UP! I CAN PULL THE WOOL OVER THEIR EYES FOREVER!
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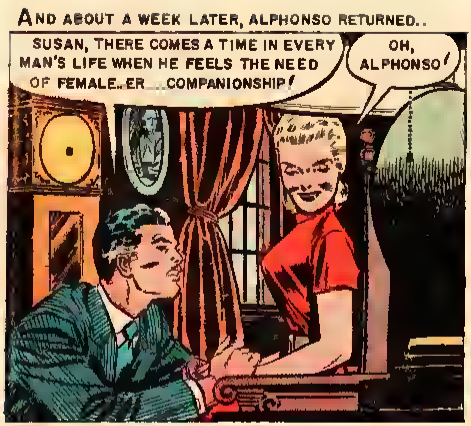
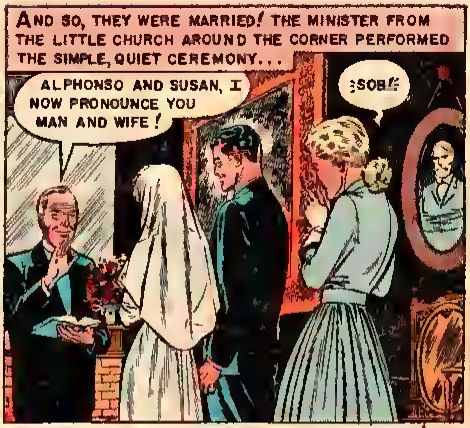

AND ABOUT A WEEK LATER, ALPHONSO RETURNED..
SUSAN, THERE COMES A TIME IN EVERY MAN'S LIFE WHEN HE FEELS THE NEED OF FEMALE..ER ...COMPANIONSHIP!
OH, ALPHONSO!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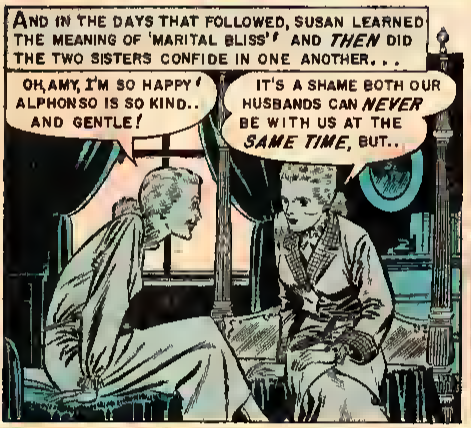
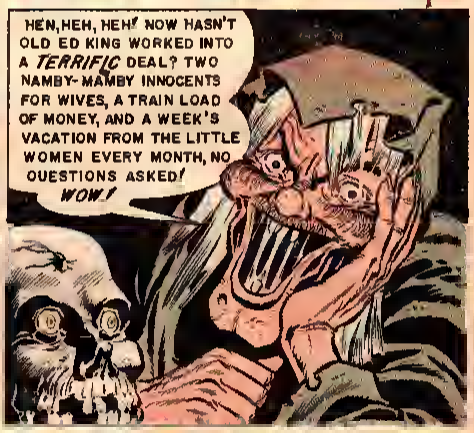
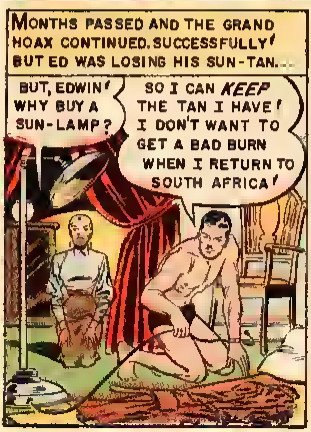
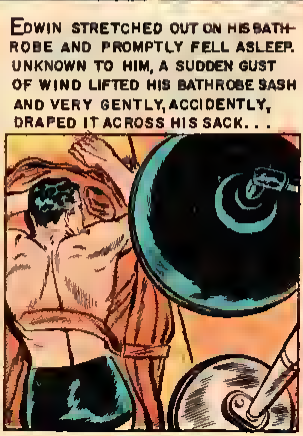
SOB!!


AND IN THE DAYS THAT FOLLOWED, SUSAN LEARNED THE MEANING OF 'MARITAL BLISS'! AND THEN DID THE TWO SISTERS CONFIDE IN ONE ANOTHER...
OH, AMY, I'M SO HAPPY! ALPHONSO IS SO KIND.. AND GENTLE!
IT'S A SHAME BOTH OUR HUSBANDS CAN NEVER BE WITH US AT THE SAME TIME, BUT..

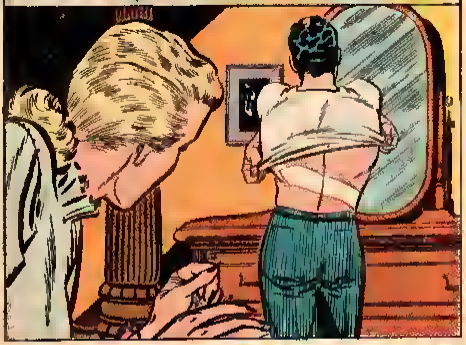

HEH, HEH, HEH! NOW HASN'T OLD ED KING WORKED INTO A TERRIFIC DEAL? TWO NAMBY-MAMBY INNOCENTS FOR WIVES, A TRAIN LOAD OF MONEY, AND A WEEK'S VACATION FROM THE LITTLE WOMEN EVERY MONTH, NO QUESTIONS ASKED! WOW!


MONTHS PASSED AND THE GRAND HOAX CONTINUED. SUCCESSFULLY! BUT ED WAS LOSING HIS SUN-TAN...
BUT, EDWIN! WHY BUY A SUN-LAMP?
SO I CAN KEEP THE TAN I HAVE! I DON'T WANT TO GET A BAD BURN WHEN I RETURN TO SOUTH AFRICA!

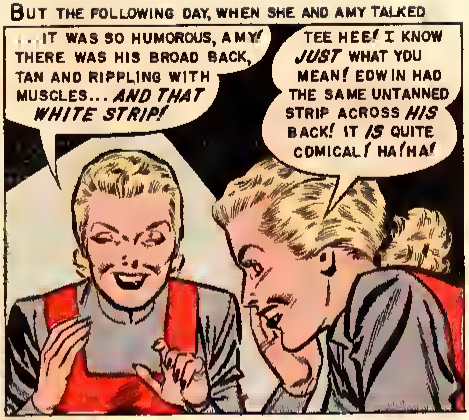

EDWIN STRETCHED OUT ON HIS BATH-ROBE AND PROMPTLY FELL ASLEEP. UNKNOWN TO HIM, A SUDDEN GUST OF WIND LIFTED HIS BATHROBE SASH AND VERY GENTLY, ACCIDENTLY, DRAPED IT ACROSS HIS SACK...

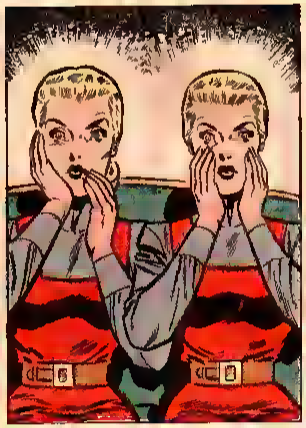
...SO THAT ON AWAKENING, A WIDE STRIP OF WHITE WAS EMBLAZONED THERE. HE NEVER GUESSED...
BUT, EDWIN! YOUR BACK!
YES, A LITTLE TOO RED! OVER-SLEPT A LITTLE! FEELS FINE, THOUGH!

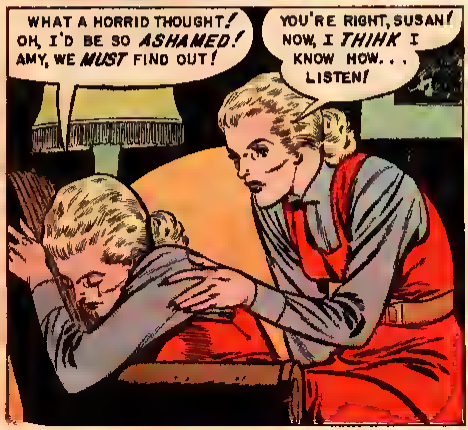
NOW WHEN ALPHONSO RETURNED ON THE NEXT SHIFT, SUSAN WAS NATURALLY PLEASED! SHE WAS SO HAPPY TO SEE HIM SHE DIDN'T EVEN THINK TO MAKE A REMARK ABOUT THE NICE, WIDE STRIP OF WHITE ACROSS HIS BACK.



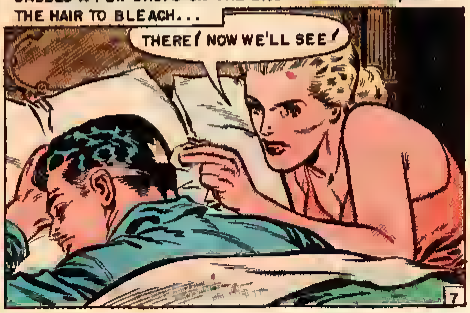
BUT THE FOLLOWING DAY, WHEN SHE AND AMY TALKED



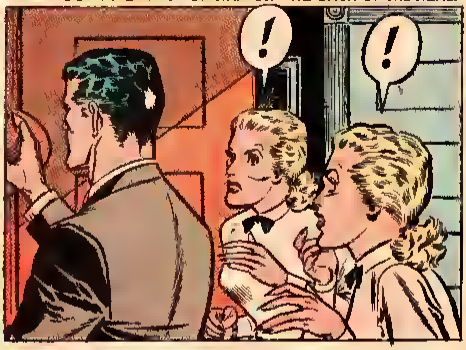


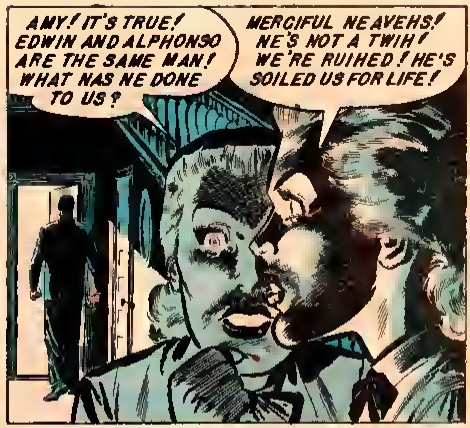


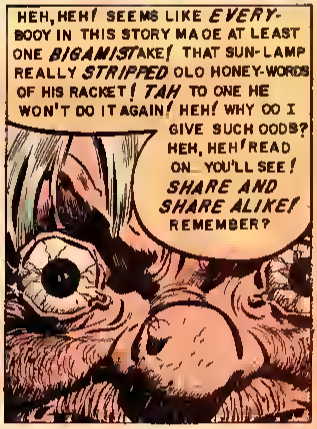
THE NIGHT BEFORE ALPHONSO WAS TO LEAVE FOR SOUTH AFRICA, SUSAN REMAINED AWAKE UNTIL HIS DEEP BREATHING ASSURED HER HE WAS ASLEEP. THEN SILENTLY, SHE REACHED INTO HER NIGHT-TABLE AND BROUGHT FORTH A SMALL BOTTLE OF PEROXIDE! SHE DABBED A FEW DROPS ON THE BACK OF HIS HEAD, CAUSING THE HAIR TO BLEACH...



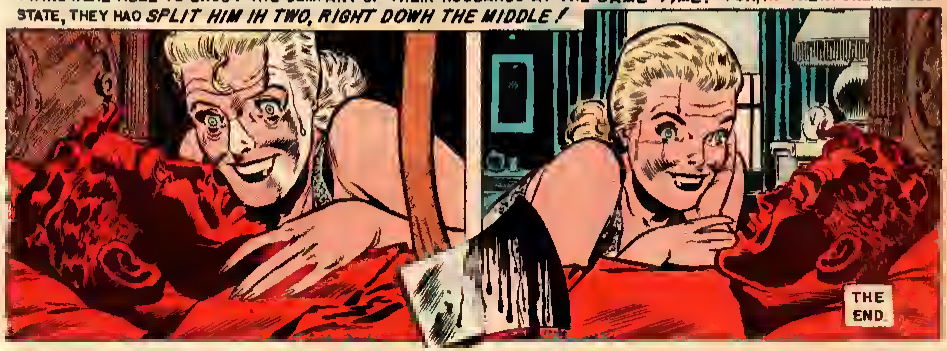
AS USUAL, A WEEK PASSED BEFORE EDWIN CAME HOME! HE ENTERED HAPPILY, AND AS HE TURNED HIS BACK TO HANG UP HIS HAT, AMY AND SUSAN STARED IN HORROR AT A SMALL WHITE PATCH OF HAIR ON THE BACK OF HIS HEAD.







THE BLOODY AXE STOOD IN THE HALLWAY, LEANING AGAINST THE WALL BETWEEN THE TWO BEDROOMS AND IF YOU WERE TO PEEK INSIDE THE CLOSED BEDROOM DOORS, YOU WOULD SEE AMY IN HER BED, CARESSING *HER* SIDE OF EDWIN, AND SUSAN DOING LIKEWISE WITH *HER* SIDE OF HIM! FOR THE *VERY FIRST TIME* THE TWO SHY, INNOCENT TWINS WERE ABLE TO ENJOY THE COMPANY OF THEIR HUSBANDS AT THE *SAME TIME!* FOR, IN THEIR UNBALANCED STATE, THEY HAD *SPLIT HIM IN TWO, RIGHT DOWN THE MIDDLE!*



THE CRYPT OF TERROR

HEH, HEH! AND NOW, IT'S *MY* TURN TO *CURDLE YOUR BLOOD*. YEP, IT'S YOUR *MOST* IN THE *CRYPT OF TERROR*, *THE CRYPT-KEEPER; SHRIEKING*... READY TO *NARRATE* ANOTHER *NAUSEATING NECROMANCY*... ANOTHER *DELVING* INTO THE *DELIRIOUS*... ANOTHER *SPINE-TINGLER*. I CALL *THIS YELP-YARN* FROM MY *COLLECTION*...

WHO DOUGHNUT?

IT WAS THE SEVENTH ONE INSIDE OF A MONTH: SEVEN WOMEN—MURDERED. THEY STOOD AROUND THE LATEST VICTIM'S AWKWARDLY SPRAWLED, CHALK-WHITE CORPSE...

JUST LIKE THE *OTHER* SIX, CAPTAIN, WOUNDS *ALL OVER HER BODY*. THOSE *SAME DOUGHNUT-SHAPED WOUNDS*. DEAD ABOUT TWENTY-FOUR HOURS!

HERE COMES THAT BLASTED NEWS-SNOOPER, HUGHES. AS IF I DIDN'T HAVE *ENOUGH* TROUBLE!

DANNY HUGHES, CRIME REPORTER FOR THE MORNING GLOBE, ELBOWED HIS WAY THRDUGH THE GAPING CROWD HELD BACK BY THE UNIFORMED POLICEMEN...
WELL, CAPTAIN! I SEE YOU BOYS ARE RIGHT ON THE JOB... AFTER THE KILLER HAS STRUCK!
OH, SHUT UP, HUGHES. LAY OFF, WILL YOU? WE'RE DOING THE BEST WE CAN!
YEAH, AND MEANWHILE, SEVEN MURDERS HAVE BEEN COMMITTED, AND YOU HAVEN'T EVEN COME UP WITH ONE SUSPECT.
WE'VE COMBED THE DOCKS... WE'VE PULLED IN EVERY SUSPICIOUS-LOOKING SEAMAN WE COULD GET OUR HANDS ON WE'RE UP A BLIND ALLEY.
THE TROUBLE WITH YOU COPS IS YOU GET HOLD OF ONE MISERABLE CLUE AND YOU WON'T LET IT GO.
LOOK, DANNY! TRACES OF SEA BRINE WERE FOUND ON THE CLOTHES AND SKIN OF EACH VICTIM...
...SO WHO COMES IN CONTACT WITH SEA BRINE? SEAMEN! DOCK WORKERS!
...MERMAIDS! LISTEN, CAPTAIN! WHAT ABOUT THE BLOOD? WHAT ABOUT THOSE WOUNDS...
HUGHES POINTED TO THE SEVERAL DOUGHNUT-SHAPED RED WELTS THAT COVERED AN ARM PROJECTING FROM THE SHEET THAT DRAPED THE LATEST VICTIM...
THE BLOOD WAS DRAINED FROM EACH OF THE VICTIMS! DRAINED DRY!
ARE YOU GOING TO GIVE ME THAT VAMPIRE ROUTINE AGAIN?
I'M TELLIN' YOU, VAMPIRES DRAIN THE BLOOD FROM THEIR VICTIMS' BODIES. THOSE ROUND RED WELTS...
THE KILLER OBVIOUSLY BEATS HIS VICTIM WITH SOME SORT OF WEAPON, DANNY! LOOK! VAMPIRES DON'T EXIST, KID! THEY'RE LEGEND... FICTION... COMIC-BOOK STUFF.
ALL RIGHT, YOU STUBBORN IDIOT! YOU KEEP BLUNDERING THE WAY YOU HAVE BEEN AND I'LL KEEP LAMBASTING YOU IN MY COLUMN UNTIL YOU GET THE... THE MURDERER...
...BESIDES! I DID SOME RESEARCH ON VAMPIRES, SMART GUY! THEY SUCK BLOOD BY PIERCING THEIR VICTIMS FIRST... WITH THEIR FANGS. THEY LEAVE TWO NEAT PUNCTURE MARKS ON THEIR VICTIMS THROATS... NOT DOUGHNUT-SHAPED WOUNDS!
2

DANNY HUGHES PUSHED HIS WAY THROUGH THE GATHERED MORBIDLY CURIOUS, AND SPED BACK TO THE GLOBE OFFICE.
HY, PAT! HEY! YOU'RE WORKING LATE TONIGHT!
THE CHIEF TOLD ME TO WAIT UNTIL YOU GOT BACK, SO I COULD DO A REWRITE ON THE LATEST KILLING, MR. HUGHES!
DANNY SLAMMED DOWN AT HIS TYPEWRITER..
OKAY, PAT! I'LL HAVE IT FOR YOU IN FIVE MINUTES!
THEY'RE HOLDING THE PRESSES FOR THE NEW MAKE-UP, MR. HUGHES!
DANNY'S TYPEWRITER BEGAN TO CHATTER. FINALLY..
HERE Y'ARE, HONEY!
THANKS!
HE STOOD OVER HER, INHALING HER PERFUMED FRAGRANCE, WATCHING HER EDIT AND CORRECT HIS ARTICLE..
TCH! TCH! YOU SHOULD LEARN TO SPELL, MR. HUGHES!
I'LL.. DRIVE YOU HOME TONIGHT, PAT!
PAT FINISHED, GOT UP, AND HURRIED OFF TO THE MAKE-UP DEPARTMENT. DANNY WATCHED HER GO, EYEING HER TRIM FIGURE, THEN...
READY? SHALL WE GO?
SURE THING!
THEY PULLED UP BEFORE PAT'S APARTMENT HOUSE. DANNY SLID HIS ARM AROUND HER..
OKAY, MR. HUGHES! TH-THANKS! BUT THIS IS WHERE I GET OUT!
DON'T BE IN SUCH A HURRY, HONEY! LET'S TALK..
HE TRIED TO HOLD HER. SHE PUSHED HIM OFF, PULLING HIS ARMS AWAY.. STRUGGLING...
CUT IT OUT, MR. HUGHES! I'M NOT THE TYPE! CRIPES! GUYS LIKE YOU ARE ALL ARMS! PLEASE... LET GO. .OF ME
OKAY, OKAY! YOU CAN'T BLAME A GUY FOR TRYING.

PAT GOT OUT OF THE CAR, AND STAMPED ACROSS THE SIDEWALK TO THE APARTMENT DOOR. SHE STOOD THERE FUMBLING IN HER PURSE FOR HER KEYS. DANNY SHRUGGED AND PULLED AWAY...

SEE YOU *TOMORROW* AT THE *OFFICE*, HONEY!

HMMPH!

AS DANNY SWUNG HIS CAR AROUND THE CORNER, HE NOTICED THE STRANGE-LOOKING FIGURE, COLLAR PULLED UP, HAT-BRIM TURNED DOWN, MOVING ALONG THE DESERTED STREET. HE ESPECIALLY NOTICED THE EYES, BURNING IN THE BLACKNESS OF THE SHADOWED FACE...

NOW *THERE'S* A *SUSPICIOUS CHARACTER* IF I EVER *SAW* ONE!

BY THE NEXT MORNING, DANNY'D DECIDED TO APOLOGIZE TO PAT FOR HIS ACTIONS OF THE PREVIOUS NIGHT...

EH... WHERE'S PAT, ED?

DUNNO, DANNY! SHE HASN'T SHOWN UP TODAY!

BY TEN-THIRTY, DANNY'D STARTED TO WORRY. FINALLY, HE HURRIED TO HIS CAR AND SPED CROSS-TOWN TO PAT'S APARTMENT...

SOMETHING'S WRONG! I CAN FEEL IT!

POLICE CARS LINED THE STREET. AN AMBULANCE, NOT NEEDED, WAS JUST PULLING AWAY AS DANNY DROVE UP...

WHAT HAPPENED?

ANOTHER MURDER!

IT WAS PAT! SHE WAS DEAD! SHE LAY IN THE LOBBY COVERED WITH THE INEVITABLE WHITE SHEET...

GOOD LORD! BUT *LAST NIGHT* WHEN I *LEFT HER*...

YOU GOT SOME *EXPLAINING* TO DO, DANNY! A *LOT* OF EXPLAINING! BETTER COME ALONG DOWN TO *HEADQUARTERS!*

THEY QUESTIONED HIM ALL DAY. DANNY STUCK TO HIS STORY. THEY KEPT IT UP... INTO THE NIGHT...

SHE WAS COVERED WITH THOSE *SAME RED DOUGHNUT-SHAPED WELTS*, HUGHES. WHAT DID YOU *HIT* HER WITH?

I *DIDN'T!* I *SWEAR* IT! WHEN I *LEFT* HER, SHE WAS *ALIVE!*

THE LAB REPORTS CAME IN
BLOOD ORAIHED. LIKE THE OTHERS! BRINE TRACES ON HER CLOTHES..
DO I LOOK LIKE A VAMPIRE..
SHUT UP, HUGHES! YOU'RE IN EHOUGH OF A JAM.
CAPTAIN! CAPTAIH! JUST GOT A CALL
SOME DAME ON THE SOUTH SIDE WAS JUST ATTACKED IN A HALL-WAY. SHE MANAGED TO GET AWAY! HER SCREAMING ATTRACTED PATROLMAN HENESSEY WHO WAS POUNDIN' A BEAT NEARBY HE CHASED THE WOULD-BE KILLER DOWN TO THE WATERFRONT... AND LOST HIM!
THE WATERFROHT! THERE, YOU SEE, YOU GRUMMY NEWS-HOUND! I WAS RIGHT! THE KILLER'S A WATER-FROHT CHARACTER
A MINUTE AGO, YOU WERE ACCUSING ME, YOU DUMB DICK! AM I FREE TO GO?
YEAH! YEAH! YOU'RE FREE! WANT TO COME ALOHG? I WANT TO QUESTION THE DAME! YOU CAN SIT IN! BUT YOU CAN'T PRINT WHAT SHE SAYS UNLESS I GIVE YOU THE OKAY!
AGREED! LET'S GO..
THE WOMAN WAS IN HER THIRTIES. SHE SOBBED OUT HER STORY...
HE--HE MUST HAVE FOLLOWED ME. HE CAME UP BEHIND ME IN THE HALL. HE GRABBED MY WRISTS AND HELD MY ARMS OUT.. LIKE THIS..
WHAT DID HE LOOK LIKE?
I COULDN'T SEE HIS FACE! BUT I SAW THOSE BURNING EYES. HE HAD A HAT PULLED DOWN OVER HIS FACE.. HIS COLLAR TURNED UP! AND HE WORE GLOVES. I REMEMBER, BECAUSE WHEN HE GRABBED ME, I TRIED TO SCREAM, BUT HE CLAMPED A GLOVED HAND OVER MY MOUTH!
THAT'S THE GUY I SAW LAST HIGHT, CAPTAIN! THE ONE I TOLD YOU ABOUT!
5

HE..HE STANK! IT... IT WAS A FUNNY SMELL... LIKE...
LIKE THE DOCKS?
LIKE THE OCEAN?
YES! THAT'S IT! IT WAS AWFUL! AWFUL! I MANAGED TO BREAK AWAY AND SCREAM, AND THE OFFICER CAME.. AND.. I GUESS I FAINTED! THAT'S ALL...
THEY LEFT HER AND DROVE BACK UPTOWN...
WELL, HUGHES? WHAT HAVE YOU GOT TO SAY NOW ABOUT YOUR VAMPIRE? YOU HEARD HER STORY!
I GUESS I WAS WRONG, CAPTAIN! BUT SOMETHING SHE SAID BOTHERS ME! I WISH I COULD PUT MY FINGER ON IT! AND THOSE WELTS...
IT WAS AFTER MIDNIGHT THAT DANNY, NOT BEING ABLE TO SLEEP, DROVE DOWNTOWN TO THE DOCKS! HE LEFT HIS CAR AND BEGAN TO WALK...
WISH I COULD THINK OF WHAT IT WAS THAT DAME SAID THAT BOTHERS ME!
SUDDENLY DANNY SAW HIM, MOVING ALONG ON RUBBERY LEGS, HIS COLLAR TURNED UP, HIS HAT BRIM TURNED DOWN, HIS EYES BURNING...
WHAT THE...? THERE HE GOES! IT'S HIM... THE KILLER!
DANNY DARTED AFTER THE SWIFTLY MOVING GLIDING FIGURE..KEEPING OUT OF SIGHT...
HE'S HEADED TOWARD WATERFRONT PARK! LORD, HE LOOKS STRANGE. DOESN'T SEEM TO HAVE A NECK!
THE LOPING FIGURE CROSSED WATERFRONT PARK TOWARD A LARGE STONE STRUCTURE...
HE'S GOING INTO THE CITY AQUARIUM!
6

THE AQUARIUM SMELLED OF BRINE AND THE SEA AND PLACES MILES DEEP AS DANNY SLID IN THROUGH THE DOOR..

THIS EXPLAINS THE BRINE ON THE CLOTHES! HE MUST HANG OUT HERE!

HUGE GLASS TANKS LINED THE WALLS ABOUT THE AQUARIUM. EXOTIC FISHES FROM THE FOUR CORNERS OF THE EARTH GAPED OUT AT DANRY AS HE MOVED DOWN BEFORE THEM...

HE'S AROUND HERE SOMEWHERE! HIDING...

SUDDENLY DANNY SAW IT! THE EMPTY TANK! THE SIGN SCREAMED AT HIM

'OCTOPUS! DEVIL FISH!'

GOOD LORD!

OCTOPU
DEVIL FISH

THE *WOMAN!* SHE SAID HE GRABBED HER BY EACH *WRIST* AND HELD HER ARMS *OUT*... AND *THEN*... *MY GOD*... THEN HE CLAMPED A *HAND* OVER HER *MOUTH!* THAT MEANS...

DANNY COULD HEAR PAT'S VOICE... THAT NIGHT... AS SHE STRUGGLED...

GRIPES! GUYS LIKE YOU ARE *ALL ARMS!*

THE *WOUNDS!* THE *DOUGHNUT*-SHAPED *WOUNDS!* GASP! THE *KILLER* IS... IS..

A SOUND BEHIND DANNY MADE HIM SPIN AROUND SUDDENLY! IT SLITHERED TOWARD HIM ON ITS EIGHT SUCTION-CUPPED TENTACLES. BEHIND IT, THE SLOUCHED HAT AND THE OVERCOAT AND THE GLOVES LAY IN A HEAP ON THE FLOOR...

AN OCTOPUS!

BEFORE DANNY HUGHES COULD MOVE, EIGHT TERTACLES HAD WRAPPED AROUND HIM, AND HUNDREDS OF DRAWING-DISCS WERE SUCKING THE WARM BLOOD FROM HIS STRUGGLING BODY!

HEH, HEH! YEP! DANNY WAS ALL WRAPPED UP IN HIS WORK THAT RIGHT, KIDDIES! THE *SUCKER!* WHY ANYBODY SWEATS BLOOD FOR A MISERABLE JOB, I'LL NEVER KNOW! BUT DANNY DID! NOW HE'S HEADED HIS LAST COLUMN PARAGRAPH ONE... OBITUARIES! AS FOR OSCAR THE OCTOPUS! WELL, YOU CAN SEE HIM, ANYTIME.. DOWN AT THE AQUARIUM! HE'S STILL MAKING HIS NIGHTLY SOJURNS, THOUGH! SO IF A GUY TAPS YOU ON THE SHOULDER, HOLDS OUT HIS HAND FOR A MATCH, TIPS HIS HAT, AND STRAIGHTENS HIS TIE AT THE SAME TIME, BEWARE! 'BYE, NOW!

WE AT E.C. ARE PROUDEST OF OUR SCIENCE - FICTION MAGAZINES! LOOK FOR...

LOOK FOR THESE SEALS WHEN YOU BUY!

THEY ARE YOUR ASSURANCE OF TOP ENTERTAINMENT...FOUND ONLY ON THE FOLLOWING E.C. MAGAZINES:

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MAD
WEIRD SCIENCE • WEIRD FANTASY
AND THE 25¢ ANNUAL ANTHOLOGIES:
WEIRD SCIENCE-FANTASY
TWO-FISTED ANNUAL • TALES OF TERROR

REFUGE

He could hear the footsteps more distinctly now; there were several cops in pursuit, and they were closing in on him with each tick of the clock. He'd never be able to make it to the exit; he'd have to find a hiding place right here in the building. It was *that*... or 10 years in Dannemora for a second burglary conviction!

He *could* ditch the stuff, he supposed, but he had put too much time and effort into this job to throw away the priceless stones in a wave of hysteria. That bundle clutched in his hand would bring in 15 grand.. it was worth the risk he was taking!

Walking swiftly, so as not to arouse the suspicion of the building guards, he found himself entering a vast circular room with huge glass enclosures dotting the high walls. It seemed, at first, as he crossed the enormous room, that he was in a glass bowl of some kind. No place to hide in *here*, he thought, conscious of the clicking heels coming down the corridor behind him. In another minute he might have to break into a sprint... then he was *really* finished! If there wasn't a place of refuge in the next room, his goose was cooked...

A sudden movement behind one of the glass walls made him stop in his tracks. There were hordes of fish behind those walls... it must be the Aquarium section of the building! His eyes darted quickly from tank to tank; off to one side, separated from the other glass enclosures, was a pool into which he thought he might be able to drop unseen. The fish were

small, he noted as he raced toward it . . . there was plenty of green shrubbery floating in the tank. Enough to hide him until his pursuers departed.

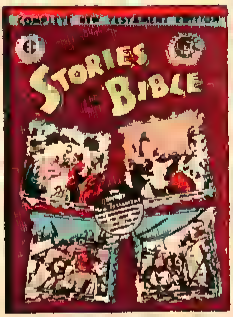
Moving quickly, he slid in beside the tank, inched up the slick glass wall and let himself down into the water just as the two policemen ran into the room. Making himself as inconspicuous as possible amidst the clinging greenery, he drew a deep breath and ducked under the surface. Through the thick glass he saw the policemen hesitate in the center of the chamber, glance around uncertainly, then race on through the far door.

Sobbing for breath, his head cleared the surface and he gulped fresh air again. The coast was clear now! Almost playfully he slapped at several of the fish coming towards him. With dismay he felt a sharp pain in the calf of one leg . . . and, at that moment, he saw for the first time the sign painted on the front of the tank.

"PIRANHA!" the sign proclaimed. "Flesh-Eating Fish!"

They were around him, now, covering him like a shroud. Their needle-sharp teeth tore at his skin . . . their weight and slashing teeth engulfed and swirled around him in a wave of blind savagery. He screamed for help . . . dropped the bundle he had been so anxious to protect. Desperately he tried to fight back . . . to fight his way out of this refuge he had found. But their ferocity kept him captive there in the tank; he felt the skin of his arms and legs torn from his body . . . tasted blood on his lips, where the piranha had slashed at his face.

He saw circles of flame before him, knew that he was being torn to pieces . . . felt their deadly teeth tearing into his throat now . . . his chest being ripped open before the relentless attack . . .



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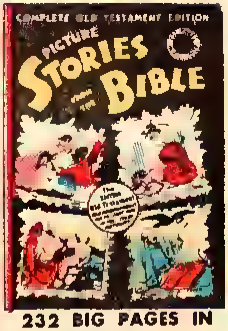

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THE VAULT-KEEPER'S CORNER

Pardon us, V. K., old bean (half-baked, that is!), but we'd like to personally answer the complaints we have been receiving from many of our readers about the absence of your and other E.C. mags from some newsstands! As we mentioned last issue, there are over 500 different comic mags being published. The wholesalers are jammed up, and the retailers simply cannot properly handle this impossible number of titles. Consequently, in desperation, many newsdealers are returning bundle after bundle of comic mags to their wholesalers UNOPENED! Some of these bundles contain said newsdealers' quotas of E.C.'s! This makes it next to impossible for you to obtain your copy, and at the same time makes it next to impossible for us to sell magazines! ASK YOUR NEWSDEALER TO MAKE SURE TO DISPLAY HIS QUOTA OF E.C. MAGAZINES. IF HE DOES NOT HAVE ANY, ASK HIM TO ORDER THEM FROM HIS WHOLESALER. HIS WHOLESALER HAS THEM! THERE IS NO SHORTAGE OF E.C. MAGAZINES . . . THEY ARE SIMPLY NOT GETTING PROPER DISPLAY! O.K., V.K.! She's all yours!—Editors

Hmmmmph! No sane newsdealer WOULD give 'em proper display! Well, space is a-wastin' . . . so let's get right into the mail

Dear Vault-Keeper,

I read your books while eating and love them! They help my digestion! So don't let those cowards whose letters you published in the Dec.-Jan. issue get you down! Boys are SUPPOSED to be braver than girls, I've always heard!

Audrey Abernathy
Kingston, Tenn.

. . . My favorite time for reading is when I eat a mid-afternoon snack! I ate a sandwich while reading the best of the best horror magazines—yours! "Till Death" was a real stomach-turner, but it didn't bother me!

Hazel Wilson
Unadilla, Ga.

P.S. Fifteen minutes later. I take back what I said above. A sick friend!—H.W.

. . . Things must be pretty peaceful around E.C. lately! No one CRITICISED you in your last letter page!

George Salaita
Big Stone Gap, Va.

. . . I think your books are disgusting. I know this will not be printed because you are afraid of the truth, but I still say that I would never lower myself to reading your low-type literature.

Gary Schooley
San Francisco, Cal.

Things haven't changed a bit around E.C., George!

Dear V. K.,

I would like to trade E.C. mags with other readers. I got enough extras of your mags to trade. Mention it, huh?

Paul George
203 S. Stewart St.
Blairsville, Pa.

. . . We started an E.C. Fan Club in 1951. Since that time, we are proud to say that our club has grown quite large. We have in our collection practically all the mags E.C. has published. We'd like to get in touch with other E.C. fan clubs.

Michael Pecker
1100 Grand Concourse
Bronx 56, N. Y.

. . . I must write you this letter to tell you that your E.C. magazines have made for me and you many new friends and E.C. fans. People I hardly know, having discovered E.C., come to my house to read my back issues and catch up on what they've missed! I've nothing else in my house but good old E.C.'s!

Frank Ray Stansbury
435 Flushing Ave.
Brooklyn, N. Y.

You're the PRESIDENT of a fan club and you don't know it, Frank!

Dear V. K.,

I can't tell you how thrilled I was to hear that you're going to adapt some stories by one of my favorite authors, Ray Bradbury. (By the way, your latest issue was the epitome of repulsiveness. I've never enjoyed retching more!)

Carol Plumb
Richmond, N. Y.

. . . Adapting stories by Bradbury, just about the best, will lift your now unsurpassable magazines to even greater heights!

Bill Lean
Cincinnati, Ohio

Thanks to Ronnie Baumgardner of Bloomington, Ill., "Just-Another-Ghoul" of McCook, Nebraska, Richard Larsen of North Bergen, N. J., Bobby Isaacs of Ashland, Ky., Harriet Shier of Jersey City, Howie Robertson of Savannah, Ga., and Jae Keogh of Ontario, Canada, for the follow additions to my horror hit parade:

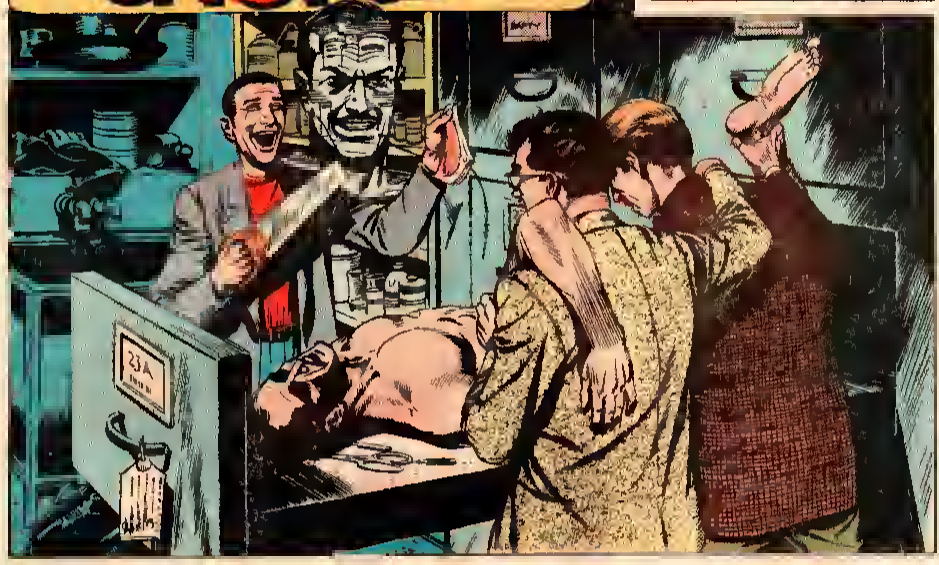
TAKES TWO TO STRANGLE
OOZING DOWN MY LIVER
GHOUL DAYS (RETCHING & WRITHING & HORROR COM-ICS)
AS SLIME GOES BY
EMBALM YOURSELF (IT'S GREATER THAN TO STINK)
I'M IN THE MOOD FOR BLOOD
HAS ANY GHOUL SEEN MY BODY?
I GET IDEAS (HEH, HEH, HEH!)
I WENT STALKING DOWN BY THE RIVER
TWO CREEPY PEOPLE

Before closing, the big news you've been waiting for! The third annual TALES OF TERROR. E.C.'s anthology of horror and SuspenStories, is now ready! Again it contains 16 complete yarns, 128 pages, and the price is still only 25c. If'n ya can't find it on the newsstand that hides your E.C. mags, and you're sucker enough to still want it, just dig up two bits . . . taking care not to disturb the crease in his buryin' pants . . . lick off the crud, perfume it a little, and "scent" it to me at the below address. Subscriptions still 75c for a foul year's supply . . . six sick issues . . . manila envelopes . . . same address as for mail (and female), which is:

The Vault-Keeper
Room 706, Dept. 30
225 Lafayette St.
N. Y. C. 12, N. Y.

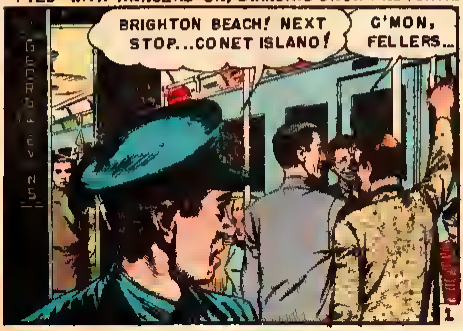
HERE'S A GAY TALE OF TINGLING TERROR. I CALL THIS LAUGH RIOT...

PRACTICAL CHOKE!

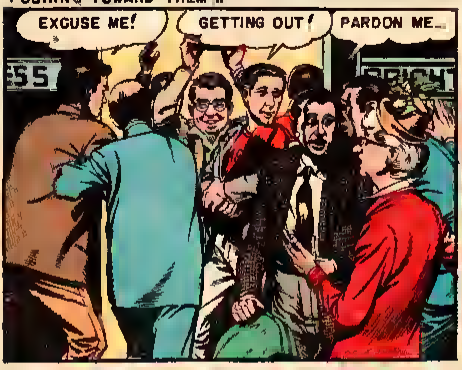


IT WAS A MORNING IN MID-JULT. IT WAS HOT AND STICKT AND THE CROWDED SUBWAY TRAIN SMELLED OF SWEAT. THERE WERE THREE OF THEM MEDICAL STUDENTS--FROM AN UPTOWN UNIVERSITT. THET HUNG ON THE SWAYING SUBWAY STRAPS, WHISPERING AMONG THEMSELVES...

THE TRAIN SPED ON TOWARD CONEY ISLAND. AT EACH STOP MORE PEOPLE, DISGUSTED WITH THE SWELTERING CITY HEAT AND LONGING FOR A PLUNGE INTO THE COOLING SURF, JAMMED THEIR WAY INTO THE BEACH-BOUND SUBWAY CAR. THE STRAPS WERE ALL OCCUPIED WITH HANGERS-ON, SWINGING BACK AND FORTH.

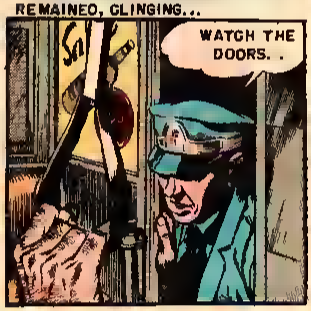


THE TRAIN PULLED INTO THE BRIGHTON BEACH STATION. THE DOORS SWUNG OPEN. PEOPLE STARTED PUSHING TOWARD THEM ..



THE CAN WAS EMPTYING FAST! THE THREE MEDICAL STUDENTS STOOD ON THE PLATFORM, PEERING BACK INTO THE TNAIN AT THE REMAINING NIDERS...WATCHING THEIR FACES.

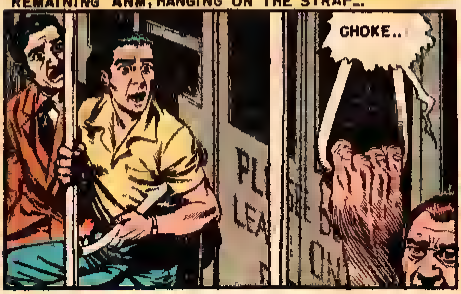
THOSE WHO HAD BEEN STANDING SCRAMBLED FOR SEATS. THE STRAPS, ONCE JAMMED WITH HANDS, NOW WENE ALMOST ENTIRELY UNUSED. ONLY ONE CLENCHED-FIST NANGER-ON REMAINED, CLINGING...



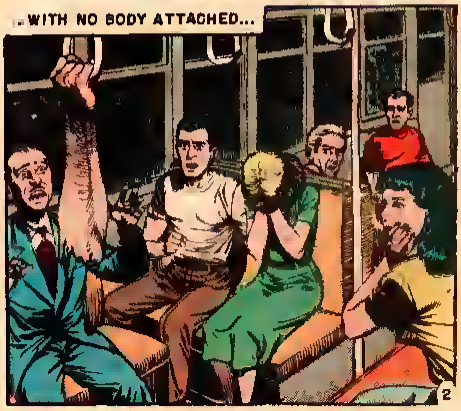
THE DOONS SLAMMED. THE TRAIN BEGAN TO MOVE ..

ON THE PLATFORM, THE THNEE MEDICAL STUDENTS HOWLED WITH GLEE, POINTING..

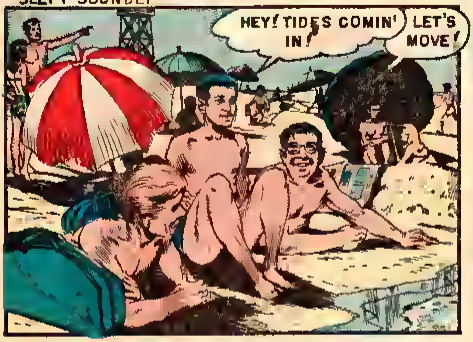
INDEED, INSIDE THE NECENTLY VACATED SUBWAY CAN, THOSE WHO REMAINED DID HAVE EXPRESSIONS OF VANIED EMOTIONS ON THEIR FADES. SOME WENE PALE... SOME CHALK-WHITE... SOME GREEN... SOME TURNED AWAY. THE ENTIRE CAR WAS STARING AT THE REMAINING ARM, HANGING ON THE STRAP...



..WITH NO BODY ATTACHED...



THEY SAT UPON THE CROWDED BEACH DOWN NEAR THE WATER, LAUGHING AND TALKING NEARBY, A NAPPING BATHER, PARTIALLY COVERED WITH A MOUND OF SAND, A NEWSPAPER OVER HIS FACE, SLEPT SOUNDLY



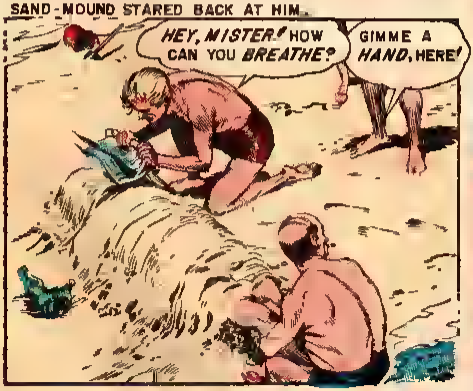
THE THREE MEDICAL STUDENTS PICKED UP THEIR BEACHBAGS AND PUSHED BACK...AWAY FROM THE INCOMING SURF...BACK INTO THE CROWD THAT OVER-FLOWED THE SAND

THE NAPPING BATHER WAS OBLIVIOUS TO THE STUDENTS' WARNINGS. HE SLEPT ON. THE THREE OF THEM MELTED INTO THE CROWD..

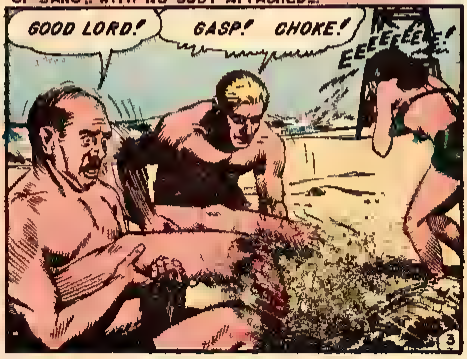
THEY WATCHED FROM THE SAFETY AND SHELTER OF THE CROWD AS SOMEONE APPROACHED THE SOUNDLY SLEEPING FIGURE...

NO RESPONSE. A HUSH SEEMED TO FALL OVER THE IMMEDIATE AREA, ALL EYES TURNED. THERE WAS A DISTANT TITTERING.

SOMEONE LIFTED THE FOLDED NEWSPAPER. A BLANK SAND-MOUND STARED BACK AT HIM.

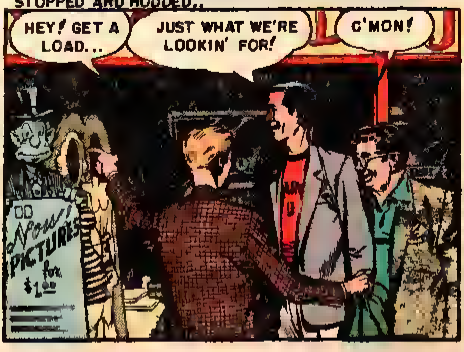


SOMEONE ELSE KNELT TO GRAB THE PROSTRATE FORM'S LEGS! THEY CAME AWAY FROM THE MOUND OF SAND.. WITH NO BODY ATTACHED...

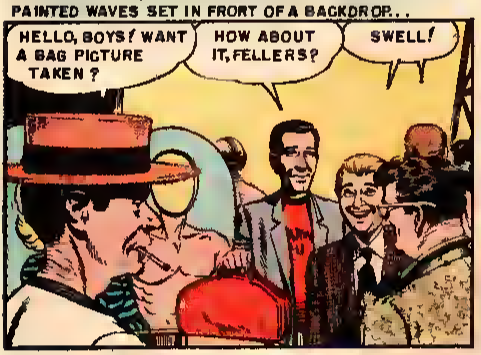


THEY MOVED ALONG THE BOARDWALK..THE THREE OF THEM...THE TEARS STREAMING FROM THEIR EYES AS THEY LAUGHED..

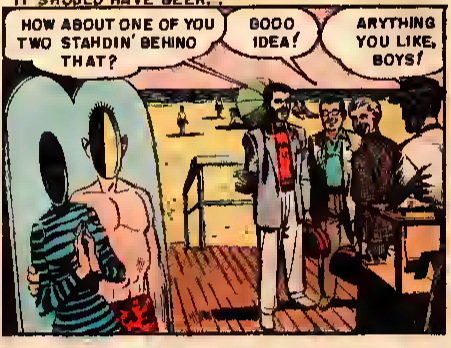
THE AMPLIFIED VOICES OF THE BARKERS BLARED AT THE THREE MEDICAL STUDENTS FROM THE VARIOUS CONCESSIONS ALONG THE BOARDWALK. ONE OF THEM STOPPED AND NODDED..



IT WAS ONE OF THOSE PHOTOGRAPHER'S SHOPS FOUND AT MOSTLY ANY AMUSEMENT AREA IT HAD THE USUAL OLD-TIME AUTO, AND THE PHONY BOAT WITH THE PAINTED WAVES SET IN FRONT OF A BACKDROP...



ONE OF THE BOYS POINTED TO THE INEVITABLE CARD WITH THE TWO HOLES IN IT WHERE THE HEADS OF THE EXAGGERED PAIR OF FIGURES PAINTED UPON IT SHOULD HAVE BEEN..



THERE WAS MUCH LAUGHTER AND A CROWD BEGAN TO GATHER. THE PHOTOGRAPHER DUCKED UNDER HIS HOOD, FOCUSING ON THE FACES PEERING OUT FROM THE OPENINGS.

THE SHUTTER CLICKED. ONE OF THE BOYS CAME OUT FROM BEHIND THE CARD AND MELTED INTO THE CROWD. THE OTHER'S FACE STILL OGLED FROM THE HOLE...

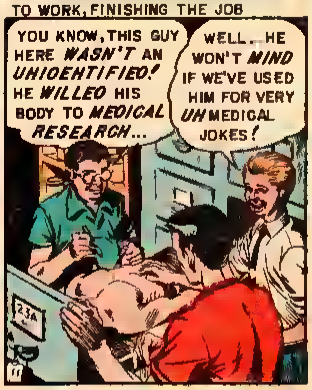
THE FACE DIDN'T MOVE! THE PHOTOGRAPHER WENT OVER AND RAPPED THE CARD. FOR A MOMENT THE HEAD SWAYED.. THEN PITCHED OUTWARD...

THE HEAD ROLLED TO THE PHOTOGRAPHER'S FEET. HE SCREAMED...
THE CROWD TOOK UP THE HYSTERICAL CHORUS...
YEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE!!!!!!!
THE THREE MEDICAL STUDENTS DARTED UP A SIDE-STREET, GLEEFULLY GIGGLING...
WHAT A RIOT!
DID YOU SEE HIS FACE?
I'M DYIN'!
THE SUBWAY TRAIN SPED THEM BACK UPTOWN. THEY SAT, RED-FACED AND TEARY-EYED, THE THREE BEACH BAGS, NOW EMPTY OF THEIR GORY CONTENTS, PARKED AT THEIR FEET.
I...I... HEH, HEH.. I THINK I'M GONNA BE SICK!
I HAVEN'T LAUGHED SO HARD SINCE MY... CHOKE..
CUT IT OUT, ALREADY! I CAN'T LAUGH ANYMORE!
BY THE TIME THEY REACHED THE CAMPUS, THEIR DISCUSSION HAD BECOME SERIOUS...
NOW WHAT?
SOMEONE'S BOUND TO CHECK THOSE CORPSES!
THEY'LL FIND ONE OF THEM WITH ITS HEAD AND AN ARM AND ITS LEGS GONE...
THE ONLY THING TO DO IS DISPOSE OF THE REST OF IT...
MAYBE IT WON'T BE MISSED!
C'MON! LET'S SEE IF WE CAN SNEAK INTO THE LAB!
CARVER HALL
THE MEDICAL BUILDING OF THE UNIVERSITY WAS LOCKED. IT WAS A SATURDAY DURING SUMMER SESSION. IT WAS TO BE EXPECTED...
LET'S HAVE THE KEY YOU SWIPED!
HERE!
THE WATCHMAN'S ACROSS AT THE LIBRARY! I SAW HIM...

THEY MOVED DOWN THE SILENT HALLS...

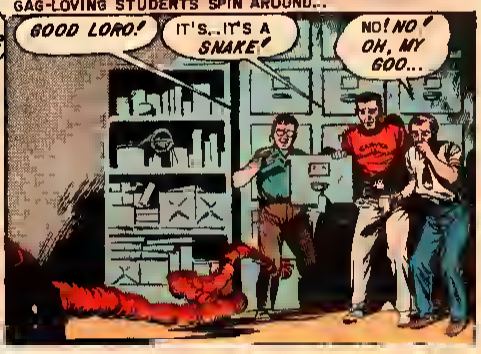
...UNTIL THEY CAME TO THE REFRIGERATED ROOM WHERE THE BODIES USED FOR DISSECTIONS WERE KEPT...

THE SLAB ROLLED OUT OF THE WALL REVEALING THE PARTIALLY DISMEMBERED CORPSE. THEY SET TO WORK, FINISHING THE JOB...



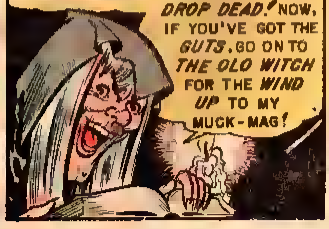
AS THEY CROWDED ABOUT THE BODY, WIELDING THEIR SCALPELS HASTILY, THEY NEVER NOTICED THE COILED-UP INTESTINES SLITHER FROM THE BEACH BAG BEHIND THEM...

THE SLIMY SUCKING SOUND OF THE INTESTINES SLIDING ACROSS THE MARBLE FLOOR MADE THE THREE GAG-LOVING STUDENTS SPIN AROUND...



ON A HUNCH, THE POLICE, INVESTIGATING THE CASES REPORTED THE PREVIOUS DAY, CHECKED WITH THE UNIVERSITY. WHEN THEY GOT TO THE REFRIGERATOR ROOM WHERE THE CORPSES WERE KEPT, THEY FOUND THE THREE MEDICAL STUDENTS... THEIR FACES BLUE, THEIR EYES BULGING FROM THEIR SOCKETS, THEIR TONGUES HANGING FROM THEIR WIDE OPEN-MOUTHS... THE LONG STRAND OF INTESTINE WRAPPED TIGHTLY AROUND EACH OF THEIR NECKS...

WHICH IS *EXACTLY* WHAT THEY *DID*, OFFICER! THANK YOU FOR YOUR *INTELLIGENT COMMENT!* AND AS FOR YOU *READERS*... WELL, IF ANY OF YOU ARE IN *MED-SCHOOLS*, DON'T GET ANY *IDEAS!* REMEMBER WHAT *HAPPENS* TO MED STUDENTS WHO USE PARTS OF BODIES AS *GAGS!* THEY GAG, ALL RIGHT... UNTIL THEY *DROP DEAD!* NOW, IF YOU'VE GOT THE *GUTS*, GO ON TO *THE OLD WITCH* FOR THE *WIND UP* TO MY MUCK-MAG!



THE WITCH'S CAULDRON!

HEE, HEE! WELL, *SALT* MY *SLOP-STEW* AND *SLING* ME A *SLUG*, IF IT ISN'T *MY* TURN TO *ENTERTAIN* YOU, OKAY! THE *CRUD* IN THE *CAULDRON* IS *CRAWLING*, WHICH MEANS ITS *REEKING-RIPE*, OR *DONE TO PERFECTION* IN *CULINARY CHATTER* (GET *THAT*)! SO, *HOP* INTO THE *HAUNT, HORRORS . THE HAUNT OF FEAR*... AND YOUR *SCREAM-SCULLION, THE OLD WITCH*, WILL *POP* A *PUTRID PORTION* OF *PROSE* INTO YOUR *YELPING YAPS*. I *CALL* THIS *TASTE OF TERROR*...

NOTES TO YOU!

JUDSON SLACK REREAD THE LETTER FOUR TIMES. HE JUST COULDN'T BELIEVE IT. THE LETTER WAS FROM 'AN ANONYMOUS FRIEND'. IT WAS ONE OF THOSE SHOCKING LETTERS, FILLED WITH THINGS ONE CARES NOT TO READ ABOUT ONE'S OWN WIFE. IT READ..

'DEAR MR. SLACK,
SINCE I CANNOT SIT IDLY BY AND SEE YOU MADE A FOOL OF, I AM WRITING THIS NOTE TO INFORM YOU THAT YOUR WIFE, ELEANOR, IS CARRYING ON AN ILLICIT LOVE AFFAIR WITH ANDREW COOKSON. I SAW THEM TOGETHER LAST NIGHT, THE 25TH, IN HIS PARKED CAR...' SOB...'IN A...' SOB... 'COMPROMISING'.. CHOKE...OH..NO! *NO! ELEANOR*...

JUDSON SLACK TRIED TO GO BACK TO HIS OFFICE WORK, BUT COULDN'T! HE MADE A PHONE CALL AND THEN DROVE HOME..

JUDSON! WHY SO *EARLY*?

YOU WERE *OUT* LAST NIGHT! YOU SAID YOU WENT TO PLAY *CARDS*! YOU *LIED*, *DIDN'T* YOU?

N-*NO*! I *DID* GO TO PLAY CARDS!

YOU *LIED*! I *CHECKED*... WITH YOUR GABBY *GIRL FRIEND*! SHE SAID YOU *DIDN'T* COME *OVER* LAST NIGHT! YOU SAW *ANDREW COOKSON* LAST NIGHT, *DIDN'T* YOU?

ANDREW COOKSON!? *NO*! I *DIDN'T*..

THEN WHERE *DID* YOU GO? I HAPPEN TO *KNOW* THAT YOU WERE *OUT* WITH HIM PARKED DOWN BY THE *RIVER* IN HIS *CAR*!

JUDSON! HOW COULD YOU *SAY* SUCH A THING?! HOW COULD YOU *BELIEVE* SUCH A THING ABOUT ME? I THOUGHT YOU *LOVED* ME! SOB..

TRYING TO MAKE A *SUCKER* OUT OF ME, EH? DON'T PUT ON THE *TEAR-ACT*, ELEANOR! I'VE *FOUND YOU OUT*! NOW, I'M *THROUGH* WITH YOU!

JUDSON, *WAIT*! DON'T *LEAVE* ME! I I *LIED* ABOUT PLAYING CARDS LAST NIGHT! I *ADMIT* IT! BUT I *DIDN'T* SEE *ANDREW COOKSON*! I I WANTED IT TO BE A *SURPRISE*! I... I WENT *SHOPPING* LAST NIGHT FOR YOUR *BIRTHDAY PRESENT*

HAH! A *LIKELY STORY*! PRETTY *GOOD*.. BUT *NO DICE*! I GOT *PROOF*, ELEANOR! I GOT *PROOF* THAT YOU'RE . NOTHING BUT A *DIRTY CHEAT*. AND I'M *PULLING OUT*! *GOOD-BYE*!

JUDSON SLACK SLAMMED THE DOOR AND STAMPED DOWN THE WALK. FROM THE HOUSE, HE COULD HEAR HIS WIFE'S PITIFUL SOBBING. HE FLUNG OPEN THE CAR DOOR ANGRILY, SWUNG IT SHUT, AND SPED AWAY..

WHAT WAS *THAT*? SOUNDED LIKE A *BACKFIRE*! *NNMMPH*! GOT TO HAVE MY *CARBURETOR* CLEANED ONE OF THESE DAYS!

THE NEXT MORNING JUDSON CAME HOME FOR HIS CLOTHES. HE FOUND ELEANOR SPRAWLED ON THE FLOOR, A REVOLVER IN ONE HAND, A SMALL PACKAGE IN THE OTHER. SHE'D BEEN DEAD FOR SOME TIME. THE TAG ON THE PACKAGE WAS SHORT AND SWEET. IT READ ..

'HAPPY BIRTHDAY'.. CHOKE.. 'DARLING... FROM YOUR.. LOVING.. WIFE.' *THEN*... *THEN*.. *ELEANOR*! *MY GOD*! *WHAT HAVE I DONE TO YOU*?

HORTON COX READ THE LETTER WITH MIXED EMOTIONS OF HURT AND ANGER. IT WAS A PAINFUL LETTER TO READ. IT WAS A SHOCKING AWAKENING, HARD TO BELIEVE SIMON PITTER, HIS MOST TRUSTED EMPLOYEE...

'..IS THE PERSON YOU ARE SEEKING, THE ONE WHO STOLE THE TEN THOUSAND DOLLARS FROM YOUR SAFE LAST MONTH. SINCE THE ROBBERY, HE HAS DEPOSITED A LARGE AMOUNT OF MONEY IN HIS ACCOUNT AT THE BANK, BOUGHT A NEW CAR, AND,..'

THE LETTER WAS SIGNED 'AN ANONYMOUS FRIEND.' HORTON COX MADE SEVERAL PHONE CALLS. THEN HE WENT INTO SIMON PITTER'S LITTLE OFFICE...

AND *I TRUSTED* YOU! NEXT YEAR I WAS GOING TO *RETIRE YOU* WITH A *LIFE-TIME PENSION!* I THOUGHT YOU WERE A *LOYAL EMPLOYEE!* AND *YOU DID THIS TO ME!*

HUH? WHY... *MR. COX!* I... I DON'T *UNDERSTAND!*

GET OUT, PITTER! GET *OUT* OF THIS *OFFICE!* DON'T EVER SHOW YOUR *ROTTEN FACE* AROUND HERE *AGAIN!* YOU *DIRTY THIEF...*

THIEF?! ME? WHAT DO YOU *MEAN?*

YOU KNOW VERY *WELL* WHAT I MEAN, PITTER! I *FOUND OUT* ABOUT YOUR *DEPOSIT.* YOUR *NEW CAR...* YOUR *NEW CLOTHES!* BY ALL RIGHTS I OUGHT TO HAVE YOU *ARRESTED! GET OUT OF HERE!*

MR. COX! I... I DIDN'T *DO* ANYTHING! IF YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT THAT *$10,000 THEFT*, I HAD NOTHING TO *DO* WITH IT!

I'M LETTING YOU OFF *EASY*, PITTER! I COULD SEND YOU UP THE RIVER FOR *TWENTY YEARS* FOR THIS! DON'T TRY TO *DENY* IT! I'VE GOT THE *PROOF!* YOU'RE NOTHING BUT A *FILTHY CRIMINAL...*

I *NEVER* STOLE ANYTHING IN MY *LIFE*, MR. COX! HOW COULD YOU *THINK* SUCH A THING OF ME? AFTER *ALL THESE...* SOB... *YEARS...*

MR. COX LEFT SIMON BLUBBERING LIKE A BABY AND STORMED BACK INTO HIS OFFICE. HE REACHED FOR THE PHONE. SUDDENLY, THERE WAS A SCREAM...

MR. *PITTER!* I *DON'T...*

GOOD LORD!

MR. PITTER LEAPED SEVEN STORIES TO HIS DEATH ON THE STREET BELOW. MR. COX SHOOK HIS HEAD SADLY AND WENT DOWNSTAIRS. WHEN THE POLICE CAME...

HE *KILLED* HIMSELF BECAUSE I *FOUND OUT* THAT *HE* WAS THE ONE THAT *STOLE* THE *MONEY!*

HIM? PITTER? *NAW!* HE WAS *CLEAN* AS A *WHISTLE!* HE WAS ON HIS *VACATION* WHEN IT HAPPENED! DON'T YOU *REMEMBER?* POOR GUY! WENT *WEST...* TO CLAIM HIS *SISTER'S ESTATE!* DIED! LEFT HIM SOME *MONEY...*

AVERILL MINTON LOOKED OUT OF HIS BANK OFFICE AT THE CROWDS THAT LINED UP BEFORE EACH TELLER'S CAGE
WHAT'S GOING ON OUT THERE, FIELDS? LOOKS LIKE ALMOST EVERYBODY IN TOWN'S OUT THERE!
THEY'RE ALL WITHDRAWING THEIR MONEY, MR. MINTON! CLOSING THEIR ACCOUNTS!
MR. MINTON PALED
NOT ALL OF THEM! GOOD LORD! THEY'LL BUST THE BANK... I'LL BE RUINED! RUINED!
IT'S THIS LETTER, MR MINTON EVERYONE SEEMS TO HAVE GOTTEN ONE. OF COURSE, I DON'T BELIEVE A WORD. BUT THE TOWNSFOLK..
AVERILL MINTON READ THE LETTER. IT WAS SIGNED 'AN ANONYMOUS FRIEND'. IT SAID ...
'DEAR DEPOSITOR, THE PRESIDENT OF THE TOWN BANK, AVERELL MINTON, HAS BEEN EMBEZZLING BANK FUNDS. ANY DAY NOW, THE POLICE WILL DISCOVER IT, AND YOUR LIFE'S SAVING'S WILL BE LOST'.. CHOKE..
STOP THEM, BERT! TELL THEM IT ISN'T TRUE! HOW COULD THEY SUDDENLY HAVE LOST THEIR FAITH IN ME?
I I TRIED, MR MINTON! I REALLY TRIED! THEY'RE FRIGHTENED!
ALL MY LIFE I'VE LIVED HONESTLY TRIED TO GAIN MY FELLOW TOWNSPEOPLE'S CONFIDENCE! NOW, WITH ONLY THE WORD OF A POISON-PEN LETTER, THEY FORSAKE ME... TURN AGAINST ME!
I .. I HAVE IT, MR MINTON! WAIT HERE!
BERT FIELDS HURRIED OUT OF MR. MINTON'S OFFICE. HE RAISED HIS VOICE ABOVE THE CLAMOR IN THE BANK LOBBY
WAIT! LISTEN TO ME! I KNOW YOU DON'T WANT TO TAKE ANY CHANCES! BUT... WHY WORRY ABOUT YOUR MONEY? WE'RE INSURED! YOUR MONEY IS SAFE... EVEN IF WHAT THAT LETTER SAYS ABOUT MR. MINTON IS TRUE! AND BELIEVE ME... IT ISN'T!
THAT'S RIGHT! OUR DEPOSITS ARE FEDERALLY INSURED! WHY NOT GIVE OLD MAN MINTON A CHANCE?
BUT IT WAS TOO LATE! IN HIS OFFICE, AVERILL MINTON SLUMPED ACROSS HIS DESK, THE LETTER-OPENER STICKING OUT OF HIS CHEST
LOOK! GASP!
4

AMBROSE BALDWIN WAS A DRIED-UP, BITTER OLD MAN. NO ONE LIKED AMBROSE BALDWIN, ESPECIALLY MR. POPKIN, THE CANDY-STORE MAN. AMBROSE WAS ALWAYS ESPECIALLY NASTY TO MR. POPKIN
SERVICE, BLAST YOU! SERVICE!
OH, HOLD YOUR HORSES, MR. BALDWIN! THESE KIDS WERE HERE FIRST! THEY GET SERVED FIRST! WHAT'LL IT BE KIDS?
MR POPKIN MADE THE KIDS THEIR MALTEOS, AND THEN FINALLY TURNED TO MR BALDWIN...
YOU'RE LUCKY YOU'RE THE ONLY CANDY STORE IN TOWN! ELSE I WOULDN'T COME HERE!
FOR MY PART YOU DON'T HAVE TO COME HERE AT ALL!
GIVE ME A BOTTLE OF INK!
HERE! TAKE IT... WITH MY COMPLIMENTS AS A PARTING GIFT! DON'T BOTHER COMING BACK TO MY STORE! I DON'T NEED YOU AND YOUR SOUR-PUSS BUSINESS!
MR. BALDWIN CURSED MR POPKIN AND STORMED OUT OF HIS STORE. SOON, HE CAME TO HIS RAMSHACKLE OLD HOUSE
WELL, WE'LL SOON FIX YOU, MR. POPKIN! HEH, HEH! JUST LIKE THE OTHERS!
ONCE INSIDE HIS HOUSE, THE OLD MAN SAT DOWN AT HIS TABLE, TOOK A PEN AND THE NEW BOTTLE OF INK, AND BEGAN TO WRITE
LET'S SEE! 'DEAR COUNTY COMMISSIONER OF PUBLIC HEALTH, THE CANDY STORE IN OUR TOWN, OWNED BY MR. POPKIN, IS A DISGRACE AND A THREAT TO THE HEALTH OF THIS COMMUNITY...'
AND THE NEXT DAY, AT THE COUNTY SEAT...
THE CANDY HE SELLS OUR CHILDREN IS WORMY AND ROTTEN. ROACHES INFEST THE PLACE, RUNNING RIGHT OUT IN FRONT OF PEOPLE, AS DO COCKROACHES AND OTHER FILTHY PESTS. I DEMAND THAT THIS STORE BE SHUT DOWN. ANONYMOUS'
WELL! LET'S GO OVER AND TAKE A LOOK AT THAT CANDY STORE, COMMISSIONER!
MEANWHILE, IN MR. POPKIN'S SPIC-AND-SPAN STORE...
IF I COULD ONLY GET MY HANDS ON THAT POISON-PEN-LETTER WRITER, I'D..I'D
WHO CAN IT BE? WHO WOULD WANT TO DO SUCH A THING? HOW CAN WE FIND OUT...?
5

MR. JUDSON SLACK, MR. HORTON COX, AND MR. BERT FIELDS SAT IN A BOOTH, OUT OF SIGHT...

MY... MY *ELLY!* KILLED HERSELF.. SOB.... BECAUSE I BELIEVED WHAT THAT *LIAR* SAID!

MY OLD FRIEND.. MY MOST TRUSTED EMPLOYEE.. SIMON PITTER.. HE *TOO*.. BECAUSE *I BELIEVED*...

AND MR MINTON! HIS HEART WAS BROKEN WHEN THEY ALL BELIEVED THOSE *LIES!*

TWO MEN WALKED INTO THE STORE. ONE STOPPED TO TALK TO MR. POPKIN. THE OTHER NOSED AROUND.

MR. POPKIN! WE RECEIVED AN ANONYMOUS LETTER ABOUT YOUR STORE, THAT IT WAS FILTHY.. RODENT INFESTED.. THAT YOU SOLD WORMY CANDY.. HAD COCKROACHES...

MY STORE? BUT.. WHO COULD HAVE *WRITTEN* SUCH TERRIBLE THINGS ABOUT *MY STORE?*

I HAVE THE *LETTER* RIGHT *HERE*, MR. POPKIN! SEE FOR *YOURSELF!*

BUT.. BUT THIS IS A *BLANK PIECE OF PAPER!*

HUH? LET'S *SEE!* *SAY!* THAT'S FUNNY! HEH, HEH! MUST'VE BEEN SOME SORT OF *GAG*, MR. POPKIN! I'M.. *SORRY!*

THIS PLACE IS *CLEAN*, COMMISSIONER! LET'S GO!

THEY WENT OUT! MR. POPKIN WATCHED THEM GO! BERT FIELD CALLED FROM THE BOOTH..

SOMEBODY PLAY A *JOKE* ON YOU, MR. POPKIN?

THAT WAS *NO JOKE*, GENTLEMEN! THAT WAS *ANOTHER* OF THOSE POISON-PEN LETTERS! *ANOTHER* PACK OF MALICIOUS LIES!

IT WAS MEANT TO BE *DEADLY SERIOUS!* IT WAS MEANT TO *HARM* ME LIKE THOSE *OTHER* LETTERS HE WROTE! YESTERDAY, AMBROSE BALDWIN CAME IN. WE ARGUED. HE'S SUCH A *SOUR* OLD MAN, I THOUGHT A *JOKE* WOULD *CHEER HIM UP...*

..SO I GAVE HIM A BOTTLE OF *DISAPPEARING INK!* THAT LETTER WAS WRITTEN BY *AMBROSE BALDWIN!*

THAT'S WHY THE LETTER WAS BLANK, EH? THE *INK* *DISAPPEARED!*

SO *HE'S* THE ONE WHO'S RESPONSIBLE FOR THOSE LIES! BUT *WHY?* WHY DID HE *DO* IT?

JUDSON SLACK GASPED... FIFTEEN YEARS AGO! I TOOK ELEANOR AWAY FROM HIM! WE WERE BOTH IN LOVE WITH HER, BUT SHE PICKED ME! HE—HE'S CARRIED A GRUDGE ALL THIS TIME!

HORTON COX SNAPPED HIS FINGERS... GOOD LORD! FIFTEEN YEARS AGO, NE AND SIMON PITTER APPLIED FOR THE SAME JOB. I CHOSE SIMON. HE MUST'VE HATED SIMON FOR IT EVER SINCE...

BERT FIELDS NODDED... YES! I REMEMBER NOW! MR. MINTON TURNED HIM DOWN WHEN HE APPLIED FOR A LOAN. HE OIDN'T HAVE THE OOLLATERAL NEEDED. MR. MINTON ALWAYS WANTED TO PROTECT HIS OEPOSITORS. IT WAS FIFTEEN YEARS AGO, AT LEAST...

AMBROSE BALDWIN LOOKED UP TO SEE THREE MEN STANDING OVER HIM...

SLACK! COX! FIELDS! WHY... WHY HAVE YOU SNEAKED IN LIKE THIS?

EVERYTHING YOU WROTE WAS A LIE, AMBROSE!

YOU'VE WRITTEN YOUR LAST POISON-PEN LETTER... YOUR LAST LIE...

AMBROSE WAS HELD DOWN WHILE EACH MAN IN HIS TURN FILLED HIS FOUNTAIN PEN WITH THE SOLUTION OF LYE THEY'D BROUGHT, STABBED IT INTO THE BITTER OLD MAN'S BODY, AND EMPTIED IT INTO HIS BLOOD-STREAM...

NOW IT'S WE WHO HAVE THE POISON-PENS, AMBROSE...

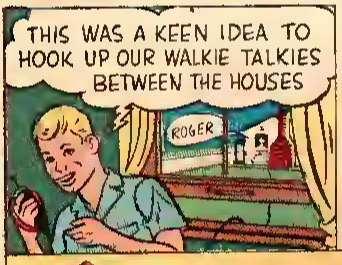
WE WHO ARE FILLING YOU WITH LYE...

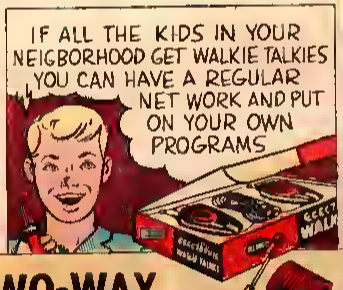
AGAIN AND AGAIN EACH OF THE MEN REPEATED THE ACTION UNTIL AMBROSE'S SCREAMS STOPPED. THEN, THEY WATCHED AS AMBROSE'S BODY BEGAN TO BLACKEN, STEAM AND BUBBLE, AND FINALLY REDUCE TO A FOUL-SMELLING, OOZING POOL OF PUTRESCENCE, DISSOLVED BY THE POISON FROM WITHIN...

HEE, HEE! WELL, THAT'S WHAT NAP-PENS TO PEOPLE WITH POISON IN THEIR HEARTS, KIDDIES. THEY EVENTUALLY ARE OESTROYED, FROM WITNIN. AMBROSE POURED OUT ONE LIE AFTER THE OTHER, BUT FINALLY HE GOT A REFILL... ONE LYE AFTER THE OTHER. AND ALL... NOW GET THIS PUN... AND ALL BE-CAUSE T'NICK SODA-STORE MAN GAVE HIM SOME DISAPPEARING INK! AND NOW, I THINK I'LL DISAPPEAR AFTER THAT ROTTEN GAG! HOPE YOU ENJOYED YOUR LURID LUNCH! WE'LL ALL SEE YOU NEXT IN MY MAG, THE HAUNT OF FEAR! 'BYE, NOW!

ELECTRONIC WALKIE TALKIES!

MADE BY REMCO





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Which of these **2 ME'S is YOU ?** that 125 lb.—6 ft. !

CHICKEN CHESTED **WEAKLING** BELOW WAS ME A FEW SHORT WEEKS AGO

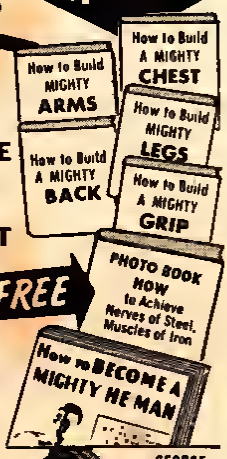
John Sill NOW

Yes! You still can win $100 and other 25th Anniversary Prizes if you MAIL coupon below NOW Your success can soon be like mine A few weeks ago I was a skinny weakling like you I had no guts to fight for my rights TODAY everyone admires my champ movie star build My **mighty** ARMS My **heroic** CHEST My wide **manly** SHOULDERS My POPULARITY with boys The way GIRLS go for me once so girl-shy My new prowess in SPORTS My new quickness in STUDIES My double energy at work

There's that skinny scarecrow JOHN Let's pass him by!

John Sill before

NO! friend you don't have to be **SKINNY** any more. Just mail **NOW** the **FREE** coupon below as I did. Soon **YOU** can add **7** inches to your **CHEST** **3½** inches to EACH **ARM** and the rest in proportion as I did.



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